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FM USDEL FRANCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5810

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

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PRESS CONFERENCE BY MR LE DUC THO MAY 12, 1972, PARIS, FRANCE

QUESTION AND ANSWER PORTION

Q- MR. LE DUC THO, AT THE TIME OF HIS LAST PUBLIC STATEMENT, PRESIDENT NIXON DID NOT CALL FOR THE WITHDRAWAL TO THE NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS. AND IN ADDITION, HE PROPOSED THAT AMERICAN TROOPS WOULD LEAVE VIET-NAM, NOT SIX MONTHS BUT FOUR MONTHS FOLLOWING AN ARMISTICE. DON'T YOU THINK THAT THIS REPRESENTS A MEASURE OF PROGRESS IN THE CONDITIONS SET BY THE AMERICANS?

A- I READ PERSONALLY, AND CAREFULLY, MR NIXON'S MAY 8TH SPEECH AND I CAN SUM IT UP IN A FEW SENTENCES. IN HIS SPEECH MR NIXON SOUGHT

TO INTENSIFY THE ACTS OF WAR AGAINST NORTH VIET-NAM BY ORDERING THE MINING OF THE PORT OF HAIPHONG AND THE OTHER PORTS OF THE DRV. THIS IS THE NEWEST ELEMENT IN HIS SPEECH WHICH I RETAINED.

THUS MR NIXON VIOLATED THE AMERICAN COMMITMENTS MADE IN 1968, TO END TOTALLY AND UNCONDITIONNALLY THE BOMBINGS AGAINST NORTH VIET NAM. THE CONDITIONS THAT HE SET IN HIS SPEECH ARE DESIGNED PRECISELY TO OBTAIN SOMETHING IN RETURN FOR THE CESSATION OF HIS RECENT ACTS.

FOR OUR PART, WE BELIEVE THAT MR NIXON HAS NO RIGHT AT ALL TO SET CONDITIONS. ON THE CONTRARY, HE MUST END THE BOMBINGS UNCONDITIONALLY,

IN CONFORMITY WITH THE UNITED STATES 1968 COMMITMENT. THE CONDITIONS SET FORTH BY MR NIXON ARE IN ERROR, AND IN ADDITION IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT THESE CONDITIONS TOOK UP ONLY THE

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MILITARY ISSUES. MR. NIXON HAS TOTALLY IGNORED THE POLITICAL PROBLEM. FOR OUR PART, WE CALL FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PROBLEM, NOT ONLY IN ITS MILITARY ASPECTS, BUT IN ITS POLITICAL ASPECTS AS WELL, BECAUSE IN EVERY WAR, THE OBJECTIVE IS TO REACH POLITICAL GOALS. IF ONE HAS NOT REACHED HIS POLITICAL OBJECTIVES THEN THE PROBLEM REMAINS UNRESOLVED.

THEREFORE, THE WAY IN WHICH MR. NIXON IS STATING THE PROBLEM SEEKS TO PROLONG THE WAR AND NOT TO REACH A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE VIETNAMESE PROBLEM. IF WE DO NOT MANAGE TO SETTLE THE MILITARY PROBLEM AND THE POLITICAL PROBLEM, HOW CAN WE CONCEIVE OF A CEASE-FIRE? WITH REGARD TO THE TIME PERIOD INVOLVED IN THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS, OUR POINT OF VIEW IS CONSISTENT. WE DEMAND THE SETTING OF A SPECIFIC DATE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH VIET-NAM OF ALL AMERICAN

TROOPS.

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY ON MANY OCCASIONS TO TELL MR. KISSINGER THAT IF THE AMERICAN PARTY IS WILLING TO SET SUCH A DATE, FOR OUR PART, WE ARE WILLING TO DISCUSS THIS QUESTION WITH THEM. BUT, WE REGRET TO NOTE THAT UP TO NOW THE AMERICAN PARTY CONTINUES TO REFUSE TO SET A SPECIFIC DATE FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS.

IT SHOULD BE SAID THAT THIS WITHDRAWAL IS THE PRESSING DEMAND NOT ONLY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE BUT OF THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD WITH REGARD TO THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD ON PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION IT WOULD SEEM TO BE A NEW ELEMENT. BUT YOU PROBABLY REMEMBER THAT A FEW MONTHS AGO MR. NIXON ALREADY PUT FORWARD A SIX MONTH PERIOD. MONTHS HAVE GONE BY SINCE THEN. MR. NIXON CONFINES HIMSELF TO A SIMPLE SUBTRACTION. HE HAS TAKEN OFF TWO MONTHS. THEREFORE THE FOUR-MONTH PERIOD HAS NO MEANING, AND THIS IN NO WAY REFLECTS A POSITION OF GOODWILL IF IN FACT MR. NIXON HAS A POSITION OF GOODWILL. IF HE WANTED TO SHOW GOODWILL HE SHOULD REFRAIN FROM INTENSIFYING THE WAR, AND FOLLOW THE PATH OF SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS.

Q. AT A TIME WHEN YOU ARE CALLING UPON ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, AND PARTICULARLY ON COMMUNIST PEOPLES, TO SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR STRUGGLE DOES THE POSITION OF THE SOVIET UNION, WITH REGARD TO THE AMERICAN BLOCKADE SATISFY YOU FULLY?

A THE SOVIET UNION IS A SOCIALIST COUNTRY WHICH HAS ALWAYS FIRMLY SUPPORTED OUR PEOPLE IN THEIR STRUGGLE AGAINST AGGRESSION FOR NATIONAL

SALVATION. WE ARE GRATIFIED BY THE STATEMENT MADE YESTERDAY BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOVIET UNION, PROTESTING THE AMERICAN ESCALATION

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OF THE WAR, PROTESTING THE MINING OF THE PORT OF HAIPHONG AND OTHER PORTS OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM.

Q- MR. LE DUC THO, YOU HAVE TOLD US ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS THAT YOU DO NOT HAVE THE INTENTION OF IMPOSING A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT ON SOUTH VIET-NAM. WOULD YOU BE KIND ENOUGH TO ELABORATE A LITTLE BIT ON THIS IDEA? IT SEEMS TO US THAT IT'S ON THIS PRECISE POINT THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BROKEN DOWN.

A- AS WE SAID, THE DIFFICULT PROBLEM WHICH REMAINS BETWEEN US AND THE AMERICAN PARTY IS THE PROBLEM OF POWER IN SOUTH VIET-NAM. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEMS.

UP TO NOW THE AMERICAN PARTY'S INTENTION IS TO MAINTAIN IN SAIGON A REGIME IN ITS PAY, IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT VIETNAMIZATION, IN A WORD, TO IMPLEMENT NEO-COLONIALISM.

ONE MIGHT SAY THAT THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION HAS SACRIFICED COUNTLESS AMERICAN LIVES TO PROTECT WARLIKE AND DICTATORIAL ELEMENTS REJECTED BY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE POPULATION AND EVEN BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

FOR OUR PART, WE HAVE SAID ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, PARTICULARLY SINCE MY ARRIVAL IN PARIS, AND TODAY FOR THE FIFTH TIME, THAT WE (THAT IS, THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DRV AND THE PRG OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH VIET-NAM) HAVE NO DESIRE TO IMPOSE A COMMUNIST REGIME IN SOUTH VIET-NAM.

WHAT WE WANT IS THE ESTABLISHMENT IN SOUTH VIET-NAM OF A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CONCORD WITH THREE COMPONENTS, CALLING FOR PEACE, INDEPENDENCE, NEUTRALITY AND DEMOCRACY.

I CAN BE EVEN MORE CLEAR WITH REGARD TO THE THREE COMPONENTS.  
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FIRST OF ALL, PEOPLE BELONGING TO THE PRG, SECOND, PEOPLE BELONGING TO THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION OF SAIGON. THIRD, PEOPLE CALLING FOR THE PEACE, INDEPENDENCE AND NEUTRALITY OF THE COUNTRY. AND THOSE IN THE THIRD CATEGORY MAY NOT APPROVE OF AMERICAN AGGRESSION BUT THEY MAY NOT APPROVE OF THE PRG EITHER. SUCH

AN ADMINISTRATION REFLECTS PERFECTLY THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIET-NAM, AND THIS IS A PERFECTLY LOGICAL AND REASONABLE SOLUTION.

BUT MR NIXON CLINGS TO HIS WELL-KNOWN POSITION, THAT IS, TO MAINTAIN THE THIEU TEAM. THAT'S THE PROBLEM THAT REMAINS UNRESOLVED. IN THIS WAY, MR NIXON CASTS RESPONSIBILITY ON OUR SIDE, SAYING THAT WE WANT TO IMPOSE A COMMUNIST REGIME IN SOUTH VIET NAM. THIS IS PURE FABRICATION.

MR NIXON CLAIMS THAT WE WANT TO IMPOSE A COMMUNIST REGIME IN SOUTH VIET-NAM TO REPRESS THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE POPULATION. BUT ON THIS SUBJECT, WE HAVE STATED ON MANY OCCASIONS THAT AFTER A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IN SOUTH VIET NAM, THE POPULATION WILL LIVE IN NATIONAL CONCORD AND FORGET ALL HATRED AND DISSENTION OF THE PAST.

ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS MR NIXON WHO PERSISTS IN MAINTAINING HIS AGENTS, WHO ARE APPLYING A POLICY OF REPRESSION, AND THUS IN MAINTAINING NEO-COLONIALISM IN SOUTH VIET-NAM.

Q- (IN ENGLISH): IT WOULD SEEM THAT ON MILITARY MATTERS THE UNITED STATES AND THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIET-NAM ARE NOT TOO FAR APART. IF MR NIXON WOULD AGREE TO THE RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT THIEU, OR IF PRESIDENT THIEU WOULD RESIGN, WOULD ALL THE OTHER MATTERS RESOLVE THEMSELVES?

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A- IN ENGLISH) ON THIS SUBJECT OUR VIEWS DIFFER RADICALLY FROM THOSE OF MR NIXON'.

FIRST, WE DEMAND THAT NGUYEN VAN THIEU RESIGN IMMEDIATELY.

AS FOR MR NIXON, HIS STAND IS THAT AFTER THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES

THAT IS, AFTER THE SIGNING OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, NGUYEN VAN THIEU WOULD RESIGN ONLY ONE MONTH BEFORE THE ELECTION. THEN ONE MIGHT WONDER WHEN THE AGREEMENT WILL BE SIGNED, WHEN A SETTLEMENT WILL BE REACHED, IN ORDER THAT THIEU MIGHT RESIGN. THIS IS TO SAY THAT THE AIM IS TO PROLONG THE MAINTENANCE OF THIS PUPPET IN

POWER MOREOVER, WE NOT ONLY DEMAND THE RESIGNATION OF NGUYEN VAN THIEU, BUT A CHANGE IN THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IS POLICY EVEN WHEN THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION IS WITHOUT THIEU.

THE REASON WHY WE DEMAND A CHANGE IN POLICY OF THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION, IS THAT THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION WITHOUT NGUYEN VAN THIEU, MUST CHANGE ITS POLICY SO AS TO CREATE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THAT NEW SAIGON ADMINISTRATION AND THE PRG- IN SO DOING, THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION SHOULD DISMANTLE ITS MACHINERY OF PREPRESSION AND COERION. AND ONLY BY CHANGING THE POLICY OF THE SAIGON ADMINISTRATION CAN A FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE FOR NATIONAL CONCORD BE CREATED--FOR NEGOTIATION AND FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

Q- I WONDER WHETHER, MR LE DUC THO, YOU ARE PREPARED TO MEET MR KISSINGER AGAIN IN A PRIVATE MEETING, AND IF SO, UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS. WILL HE HAVE TO BRING SOMETHING NEW?

A- (IN ENGLISH) IT IS OUR VIEW THAT THE PARIS CONFERENCE ON VIET NAM INCLUDES TWO FORMS OF SESSIONS: FIRST THE PUBLIC SESSIONS WHICH ARE HELD EVERY THURSDAY ON KLEBER STREET. SECOND, PRIVATE MEETINGS. AND THESE TWO FORMS OF SESSIONS ARE LINKED TO EACH OTHER.

AND WE BELIEVE THAT AT THE PRESENT, MR NIXON IS NOT YET PREPARED FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATION BECAUSE AT PRESENT HE IS INTENSIFYING AND EXPANDING THE WAR. HE IS STEPPING UP THE ATTACKS AGAINST NORTH VIET-NAM. HE HAS MINED AND BLOCKADED ALL OUR PORTS.

UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, HOW CAN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS BE HELD?

AND IN HIS SPEECH OF MAY 8TH, HE STATED THAT HE HAS CHOSEN ONLY ONE WAY, THAT IS, THE WAY OF INTENSIFYING THE WAR.

THIS HAS SHOWN THAT HE IS NOT YET PREPARED FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. AS FOR US, WE HAVE STATED THAT WE ARE PREPARED, THAT THE ONLY WAY TO PEACEFULLY SETTLE THE VIET-NAM PROBLEM IS THROUGH NEGOTIATION, AND WE ARE PREPARED TO CARRY OUT THESE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOODWILL AND SERIOUS INTENT, WHILE MR NIXON IS INTENSIFYING U.S. ATTACKS

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AND BOMBINGS AGAINST NORTH VIET-NAM- MY PRESENCE HERE IN PARIS  
IS EVIDENCE OF OUR GOODWILL AND OUR DESIRE FOR NEGOTIATIONS.  
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